critical digest

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This Week in NYC

Broadway ticket buyers nominated How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying the first hit of the new season by a day-long double line at the box-office following the publication of the unanimous rave notices. Musical had $600,000 advance sale, mostly to full- house theatre parties, but sold few tickets at the box-office prior to opening. First day box-office sales totalled $20,000.

Plays

Two out-of-town tryouts closed for repairs. A Short Happy Life, the dramatization of Hemingway stories, cut short its tour in Los Angeles. Instead of opening in NY in Feb, it will debut in Nov with Kermit Bloomgarden joining A. E. Hotcher and Jerome Briody as co-producer. Kicks & Co, musical by Oscar Brown, Jr, closed after four performances in Chicago. A special angels audition was presented at Imperial Theatre, NYC, to raise the $100,000 required to keep show open.

Irma La Douce to move Oct 30 to Alvin... Purlie Victorious to move Nov 20 to Longacre... Laurrette, which closed out-of- town last season, to be presented this season by Roger Stevens, staged by Joseph Anthony... The Aspern Papers British hit by Michael Redgrave rescheduled by David Black for Jan, staged by author, starring Ralph Bellamy (at normal salary.)

Players

Rosemary Rainer subbing for vacationing Margot Moser, My Fair Lady... Helena Scott to sub for vacationing Julie Andrews, Camelot, Oct 28-Nov 9... Marissa Mason to replace Laurie Peters, The Sound of Music... Anita Gillette, the understudy who left Carnival to join The Gay Life, written out of new show... Vince Gardenia and Max Gulack join Daughter of Silence... Claude Gersene, 10, to have a leading role in First Love... Robert Whitehead reelected president of League of NY Theatres... Courtney Burr, 70, producer, found dead in NY apartment of natural causes.

NYC Calendar

Saroyan Double Bill- East End-(85 E4) 10/22. Shelley & Barry Gordon present revival of two short Saroyan plays- "Talking to You" and "Across the Board on Tomorrow Morning" directed by Arthur Storch.

Kwamina-54th St 10/23. Alfred de Liagre, Jr presents new musical with book by Robert Alan Aurthur, music & lyrics by Richard Adler, directed by Robert Lewis, dances and musical numbers by Agnes de Mille. With Sally Ann Howes, Terry Carter, Rex Ingram, Ethel Ayler.

An Evening with Yves Montand-Golden 10/24. Alex Cohen-Norman Granz-Jacques Canetti present French entertainer for limited run. 9 PM curtain nightly.

Clandestine on the Morning Line-Actors Playhouse (100- 7th Av S) 10/24. John Weems- Robert Buccolo present play by Josh Greenfield directed by Allen Davis 3rd. With James Earl Jones.

LOOK! We've Come Through -Hudson 10/25. Frank Prince- David Black present comedy drama by Hugh Wheeler, directed by Jose Quintero with Collin Wilcox, Clinton Kimbrough.

Write Me A Murder- Belasco 10/26. George Schaefer presents & directors new psychological thriller by Frederick Knott with Kim Hunter, James Donald, Torin Thatcher.

O Marry Me- Gate (162-2nd Av) 10/27. Lily Turner presents musical version of "She Stoops to Conquer" by Lola Pergament and Robert Kessler, directed by Michael Howard with Elly Stone.

Go Show Me A Dragon-Midway(422W42) 10/27. Hannaford Productions presents drama by Gene Feldman.

The Buskers-Cricket (162-2nd Av) 10/28. Amnon Kabatchnik & Lois Bianchi present English play by Kennett Jupp, directed by Kabatchnik.

Off Broadway

Shows that closed include-- The Opening of a Window after 24, One Way Pendulum after 40, and Under the Milkwood after 202 performances... The Pirates of Penzance completed Phoenix run and will start tour of US and England ... American Savoyards open 24 week season Oct 26 with The Merry Widow at Jan Hus House presented by David Lipsky Productions ... Another Evening with Harry Stoones switched debut from Oct 17 to Oct 20

Red Eye of Love, which will move to a midtown Off Broadway theatre in Dec, to be presented in repertory with Fortuna, a new musical with book by Arnold Weinstein and music by Francis Thorne. John Wulp director. Mon nite revues directed by Ben Bagley will also be presented.

The Automobile Graveyard by Arrabal, a Spanish author living in Paris, to be presented Nov 13 at 41st St Theatre, directed by Herbert Machiz... Madame Aphrodite new musical with book by Tad Mosel, music & lyrics by Jerry Herman to be presented Dec 27 at Orpheum, directed by Robert Turoff.

Playhouses

Two items may win a reprieve for the Hudson Theatre. Producer Robert Breen who rents a top floor apartment refuses to move, and new buyer Samuel Lehrer reports some interest in construction of a combination theatre and parking garage.

Legal Dept

NYC Mayor Wagner signed City Council bill repealing 5% theatre admission tax after it was approved by Board of Estimate ... Faith Dane to sue Gypsy producers for $50,000 charging her strip-trumpet act was used without her permission after she left musical.

Broadway Business

Variety reports six sellouts including newcomers How to Succeed, Milk & Honey, and Sail Away.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

A Shot in the Dark-Booth 10/18. 5 pros- and 2 cons- Times, Mirror- filed on Harry Kurnitz' adaptation of Marcel Achard's French play, presented by Leland Hayward, directed by Harold Clurman with Julie Harris, Walter Matthau, William Shatner, Gene Saks, Diana van der Vils. Affirmatives were all raves for cast, adaptation, direction. Negative voters blamed adaptor and/or director for missing. Pro side headed by Kerr, Herald Tribune, who cheered droll, dry engaging murder mystery, the company in fine form at every thrust and counter-thrust under tightrope walk direction. Chapman, News, applauded saucy, classy sex comedy skillfully adapted, amusingly directed. Watts, Post, recommended thoroughly amusing evening with Harris in her best role in several years, written and adapted with wit, skillfully staged. McClain, Journal American, loved intelligent, superbly performed play, with Kurnitz' rare and irrational wit and skillful direction. Nadel, World Telegram & Sun, was only pro reviewer to hint that it was an effective vehicle for star. Walter Matthau who replaced late Donald Cook was also cheered by all. Dissenter Taubman, Times, found it only moderately entertaining example of the saucy comedy with the adaptation too often dragging. He felt Harris' portrayal deserved a less mechanical plot. Coleman, Mirror, vetoed evening because he felt director failed to unify the performances so all were tongue-in-cheek.

Do You Know the Milky Way?- Rose 10/16. 2 pro- Times, Post- and 5 con- filed on two character play by Karl Wittlinger, presented by Ninon Tallon-Paul Feigay-Dick Buttons, directed by Herbert Berghof with George Voskovec and Hal Holbrook. All reviewers praised histronic talents of both actors. Pros recommended unusual fantasy but warned it had limited appeal. Three of five cons answered "No" to the title question, one blamed director, one blamed script. Minority pro aisle-sitter Taubman, Times, compliment casts' convincing grasp of author's special style. Watts, Post, lauded stimulating adventure, thoughtful, puzzling, absorbing, imaginative theatrical form. Con viewers Chapman News, Levenson, World Telegram & Sun, and McClain, Journal American, admitted they didn't know what was going on onstage. Kerr, Herald Tribune, feared script was actor-trap in which director Berghof was so busy with brilliant detail that he left no room for actors. Coleman, Mirror, doubted if author fulfilled his interesting potentialities of his idea.

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying- 46th St 10/14. 7 pros-unanimous raves- filed on new musical based on Sheperd Mead's book adapted by Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock, Willie Gilbert, music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, presented by Cy Feuer and Ernest Martin, directed by Burrows, dances by Hugh Lambert, musical staging by Bob Fosse with Robert Morse, Rudy Vallee, Bonnie Scott, Claudette Sutherland, Charles Nelson Reilly. Everybody and everything drew raves- book, music, direction, casting, players, orchestration, etc. Question of long title solved by Post ("How") and World Telegram & Sun ("Succeed'). Taubman, Times, lead off rave band-wagon by praising brilliant direction, amusing orchestration, lyrics with edge, tunes with grin, dividends everywhere. Kerr, Herald Tribune, rated it sassy, gay, exhilarating, distinguished by book fashioned along deadpan lines of Burrows' piano parodies, a musical with a mind. Chapman, News, believes it is the definitive musical on high life in NYC, an example of perfect musical comedy construction. Coleman, Mirror, okayed hit with script tailored to Morse and Vallee, lyrics with tongue in cheek and music with a zing. Watts, Post, raved about the brilliant musical comedy in which everything works. McClain, Journal American, suggested most inventive, stylized, infectious show may come close to introducing a new form of musical. Nadel, World Telegram & Sun, highlighted triumphant music and playbook that maintains an almost unbelievable level of satirical brilliance.

Let It Ride- O'Neill- 10/12. 1 pro- News- and 6 con- filed on musical based on "Three Men on a Horse" with book by Abram Ginnes and Ronny Graham, music and lyrics by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans, directed by Stanley Prager, dances by Onna White, presented by Joel Spector with George Gobel, Sam Levene, Barbara Nichols, Paula Stewart. Sole pro notice was rave from Chapman, News, who enjoyed the bright and intelligent show, with deft and original music, and two delightful gentlemen leading delightful company. But rest of his colleagues disagreed. Most negative notices stated that leads could not sing and had little to do, while one thought idea was worth another try with different authors and producers. Taubman, Times, felt book tended to be sluggish, songs serviceable. Kerr, Herald Tribune, admitted he was a sucker for Gobel's style of comedy but feared nothing happened in musical. Coleman, Mirror, thought songs deserved better projectionin also-ran show. Watts, Post, panned it as commonplace and disappointing. Nadel, World Telegram & Sun, did not like pallid musical which added nothing but dead weight to a fleet farce, he suggested another try by others.

The Cave Dwellers-Greenwich Mews (131 W 13) 10/15. 1 pro- Journal American- and 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Post, World Telegram & Sun- filed on revival of 1957 William Saroyan play presented by Stella Holt, Elizabeth Roberts, Maurice Schaded, directed by Michael Lindsay Hogg with Geraldine Fitzgerald recreating her Broadway role, Anthony Zerbe, Joanne Miles, David Scott Milton. Single pro notice from Lapole, Journal American, raved about one of the most notable Off Broadway productions of the season, a superb cast in tender and moving play. Negative reviewers generally okayed script, blaming cast members though they differed on which ones were wrong.

Diff'rent-Mermaid (422 W 42) 10/17. 4 pro- Times, Mirror, Post, World Telegram & Sun- and 2 con- Herald Tribune, Journal American- filed on revival of 1920 O'Neill play presented by Torquay Co & Ruth Kaner, staged by Paul Shyre with Marian Seldes, Michael Higgins, Jen Jones, and Robert Drivas. Affirmative votes for both play and production, while negative votes divided between director and play. Taubman, Times, felt that despite some stilted dialogue and old fashioned theatricalism the play remains valid, staged with increasing tension by fine cast. Coleman, Mirror, recommended it for all dyed-in-wool O'Neill fans not averse to depression in theatre. Watts, Post, praised excellent revival of work of dark and stubborn power. Alpert, WTS, thought cast was uneven, but production was always interesting, frequently moving. Both dissents were harsh pans. Crist, Herald Tribune, put full blame on director Shyre for turning tragedy into melodrama boarding on farce. McClain, Journal American, didn't think much of it as a play, and didn't think it was particularly well acted or directed.

NYC FUTURE CALENDAR

All in Love- Martinque- 10/30...Garden of Sweets-ANTA-10/31...Complaisant Lover-Barrymore- 11/1...Kean-Broadway- 11/2...Go Fight City Hall- Mayfair-11/2 Bella- East 11th St- 11/7...Sharon's Grave- Maidman-11/8 Gideon- Plymouth-11/9...Automobile Graveyard- 41st St-11/13...Shadows of Heroes-York-11/14...The Apple-Living-11/15...'Toinette- 11/17...Gay Life- Shubert- 11/18 ... The Policeman & At Sea- East 74- 11/20...Red Roses for Me- G Mews- 11/20...Sunday in NY- Cort 11/21...Man for All Seasons-ANTA-11/22...Simone- 11/29...Daughter of Silence- 11/30.

GREEN ROOM DEPARTMENT

SUBSIDY & GOVERNMENT...A Washington political columnist and a NYC reporter each predicted backing by President Kennedy of a performing arts subsidy bill. The outcome of the Nov 15-17 NY open hearings of the House Education Committee hearings may result in such a bill the President will push, hints Montgomery, Journal American. The closing remarks of Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg at the arbitration sessions of Metropolitan Opera Assn and its musicians also hinted at such a move, notes Molleson, Herald Tribune.

VOX TIX...5 Yes, 1 No filed on News' Inquiring Photographer query " Should the repeal of the 5% theatre ticket tax be passed on to playgoers." Sole negative voter was gourmet shop owner Peter Simon who thought the reduction was so small it wouldn't make much difference. ...Two afternoon daily editorials urged equal treatment for NY motion picture industry . Journal American and World Telegram & Sun hoped NY City Council would also repeal 5% motion picture theatre admission tax. Money would not be passed back to ticket-buyer, but be used by motion picture theatre owner to fight rising " overhead."

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...The three Off Broadway shows which battled for the right to open on Sept 27 (Hi Paisano, The Thracian Horses, Fourth Ave North) all closed by Sun of the same week, reminds McHarry, News... Watts, Post, bets Ward Morehouse, Newhouse Papers , and Sobol, Journal American, are surprised to find themselves enrolled among the avant gardists who liked The Caretaker.

LEGIT ANIMAL CENSUS...Poll-taker Little, Herald Tribune, records 6 male French poodles and one female mongrel in Sail Away, three sheep and one milking goat in Milk and Honey, and one cat in Everyone Loves Opal.

SECOND GUESSES...The Caretaker was the subject of most Sunday follow-up articles. Kerr, Herald Tribune, stated that to treat Pinter's play as though it was an imperti - nent comedy or a cocktail-party canape is to demean it, even to center attention on what is least good or interesting about it. It is an experience to be approached seriously or not at all, Kerr concludes... Chapman, News, marked it as the first really stimulating production of the season , the liveliest play from London since " Look Back In Anger" and far more artful and vastly more entertaining... Watts, Post, rated it as a strange, haunting, provatively elusive drama, an important work of theatrical art.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Harold Pinter, The Caretaker author, told Fields, Mirror, a little of what his new play means, something he has not stated before in print. It applies to many people, it is difficult for people to live together, to enter into each other's lives. They're self-absorbed, selfish, lonely, with little compassion for each other. They do communicate, and it's that communication that's frightening.

THEATRE ADS...Everyone Loves Opal display ad in Times and Herald Tribune features letter from author John Patrick explaining the state of the world and the state of the theatre motivated him to write the comedy. It seems to him that if you were worried about the fallout it would be far better to fall in the aisles with laughter. So he conceived this "prank" for whatever relief it might offer.

PROS & CONS BY TMK

How to Succeed is a perfect blending of all elements of the modern musical theatre into a wacky, witty farce. There isn't a weak cast member, number, and/or idea in the delightful, jet-paced frolic. The dialogue and lyrics join in one of the cleverest, funniest frontal attacks on Business One-Up-Manship devised for any medium. The illustrated musical handbook's casting is nothing less than inspired. Direction chores divided between book, music and dance experts combine to make the evening a literate musical smash.

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Everyone Loves Opal is a lovely, funny character study of the most delightful and believable crackpot in the recent onstage gallery of junk collectors. Eileen Heckart's warm-hearted, low-comedy portrayal is a masterpiece. She is given able support by the ingenious direction of Cyril Ritchard and a splendid supporting cast. No one but a drama critic could complain of the few slow moments and a rather weak final curtain.

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Do You Know the Milky Way? is an unusually imaginative contemporary morality play providing a character field day for George Voskovec. The diverse two character scenes presented by Voskovec and Hal Holbrook, plus a film sequence, put the author's views on world guilt in general and German war guilt in particular into clear prospective . His pretentious reminder of his chosen locale, putting the paying customers in an insane asylum, is overdone and not very funny. Talented two actor cast and director Herbert Berghof bring life, action and suspense to the difficult script.

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Let It Ride is a big, brassy, boring musical that is not very funny, not very amusing, and has almost nothing to do with the original "Three Men on a Horse" plot. Sam Levene's established comedy-song-dance-acting talents are wasted, while George Gobel's legit talents seem nonexistent. Non-descript songs sung by non-singers have little to do with the characters, plot or general subject . Sole humorous moment is a policemen's chorus number in the best borrowed Gilbert & Sullivan style.

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The Cave Dwellers is a timely revival of Saroyan's pre-avant garde play of affirmation. At the exact moment when many Americans are taking the Con Ed slogan of "Dig We Must" literally, Saroyan's people speak out boldly and clearly against just such frightened nonsense. Two NY newcomers, Anthony Zerbe and David Scott Milton, make brilliant debuts in this well-presented Off Broadway revival.

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Diff'rent is a stimulating, powerful harsh tragedy presented by an excellent cast. The little known 1920 O'Neill drama tackles big human issues head-on. The destruction of the individual characters takes place onstage in huge, sweeping strokes. Marian Seldes virtuoso performance is one of the best acting jobs in town, on or Off Broadway.

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OUTER BROADWAY THEATRE LETTER

College Theatre

The Last Days of Lincoln, first play by Mark van Doren, being presented Oct 18-24 at Florida State Univ, Tallahassee featuring NY actor Jim Campbell in the title role and John Black, a local Negro high school teacher in the production at the segregated school. Richard Fallon directed. Sponsored by the Eddie Dowling Foundation it will tour other Florida colleges.

On the Banks of the Wabash new play by William Saroyan will play Dec 1-9 at Loeb Theatre, Purdue Univ, Lafayette, Ind, where playwright is in residence this term... Orestes Poised a new play by Bernard Beckerman, Chairman, Drama Dept, Hofstra College, Hempstead, NY, will be presented there May 4-13.

"Off Broadway Theatre" symposium with Edward Albee, Joe Papp, Ted Mann, T Edward Hambleton to be held at Long Island Univ, Brooklyn, NY Oct 24... Triangle Club, Princeton, NJ, Univ tour to start Dec 7 at Princeton, ending Jan 6 in NY after playing 17 cities.

Maurice Evans awarded an honorary degree by Brandeis Univ, Waltham, Mass.. Elia Kazan lectured at Carn Inst of Tech, Pittsburgh... Carolyn Lasater, Miss Utah in recent Miss America Pageant invited to be a co-producer of a forthcoming David Merrick show. She is studying drama at Univ of Utah, Salt Lake City.

New Playhouses

Swan Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisc to open Jan 1 in Hotel Antler ballroom. Ray Boyle and Robert Goodsitt co-producers. A ten play program in 700seat theatre-restaurant to present stars and a resident company. Combination ticket of $7.50 for dinner, show, dancing is planned.

Civic Square Theatre, Toronto, will open at former Casino burlesque house which will be renovated. Murray Little will present program of Off Broadway plays starting with The Fantasticks, to be followed by The Blacks, The Balcony and The Premise.

Winter Repertory

Royal Poinciana Playhouse, Palm Beach, Fla opens 5th season Jan 22 with pre-Broadway tryout of Chrysanthemum, London hit musical, starring Patrice Munsel. Bells Are Ringing directed by Jule Styne will be presented Feb 5.

Karamu Theatre, Cleveland, opens 38th season with revised version of Candide... Joshua Beane and God new play by Texas authors Hal Lewis and Clifford Sage to star Burl Ives in Dallas Theatre Center tryout Dec 12. Ives may present it in NY.

ANTA

"Best of Everything" benefit Oct 22 at Waldorf Astoria, NYC, sponsored by ANTA, raised funds for restoration of 1876 Goodspeed Opera House, East Haddam, Conn.

Community Theatres

Studio Theatre, Buffalo, NY, starts 35th season with Touch of a Poet, followed by Banners of Steel, Camino Real, Five Angels.

Drama Desk

Merging of Boston Record and American into one daily makes Elliot Norton drama critic and Peggy Doyle drama editor of the new paper.

AETA

New England Theatre Conference published "Most Satisfying Productions 1956-60" listings of 360 plays from 78 groups.

Road Shows

6 PM Fri performances of Lena Horne Revue to be tested by Alex Cohen's "9 O Clock Theatre" at O Keefe Center, Toronto. Regular performances will be at 9 PM ... Package musical revues will be presented at nine Goodman Hotels by Hal Martin, starting with Parade at Allerton Hotel, Chicago. Theatre-restaurants will be built on roofs of the hotels.

London

Simple Spymen to be presented at Royal Shakespeare, Stratford-Upon-Avon- Dec 12.. Do Re Mi opened at Prince of Wales to enthusiastic audiences.

Paris

Marguerite Monnot, 58, composer of Irma La Douce, died.

US Repertory

Theatre Guild-American Repertory Company drew capacity audiences at San Jose, Costa Rica. Group is now in Mexico City.

Europe

A Man for all Seasons presented in Berlin by Munich State Theatre... The Fantasticks to be presented this month in Stockholm.

Current Road Tours

Complaisant Lover- Colonial, Boston- 10/16.

Garden of Sweets-Walnut, Philadelphia 10/16

Gay Life- O'Keefe, Toronto 10/23

Gideon- Locust, Philadelphia 10/14

Kean- Shubert, Philadelphia 10/10

Best Man-Blackstone, Chicago 10/2

Bye, Bye Birdie-Shubert, Boston 10/9

Fiorello!- Shubert, New Haven 10/23

Gypsy- Biltmore, Los Angeles 10/2

Miracle Worker-Orpheum, Minneapolis 10/23

Music Man- Pabst, Milwaukee 10/16

Rhinoceros-Hartford, Los Angeles-10/23

Sound of Music-American-St Louis 10/24

Taste of Honey- Royal Alexandria, Toronto 10/9

Tenth Man- Shubert, Boston 10/23

Toys in the Attic- Forrest, Philadelphia- 10/23

"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week." CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.